

The surest way to protect your electrical system is to keep it from getting wet. All outlets, switches, light sockets and junction boxes, as well as the main breaker or fuse box and electric motors, should be out of danger of getting wet. Make sure each circuit is labeled so you know which circuit controls which outlet and switch.

Elevate electric panel to a recommended minimum 12-foot safety margin above the base flood elevation of the highest known flood level if you are outside of any known flood zone (FEMA, *Reducing Risks from Flooding*, 1998). All components of the electrical system, including the wiring, should be raised at least one foot above the 100-year flood level. In an existing business, this work may require the removal of some interior wall sheathing (e.g., drywall). If you are repairing a flood-damaged building, elevating the electrical system will be easier.

Practical Tips:

- Electrical system modifications should be done by a licensed contractor, who will ensure that the work is done correctly and according to all applicable codes. This is important for your safety.
- Your contractor should check with the local power company about the maximum height that the electric meter can be raised.
- If your business is equipped with an old-style fuse box or low-amperage service, you may want to consider upgrading to a modern circuit breaker system and higher-amperage service.

Costs considerations: Raising the electrical panel, meter, and all the outlets, switches, and wiring in a 1,000 square foot, single-floor business will cost about \$1,800 to \$2,500. If this work is performed during the repair of a damaged structure or construction of a new building, the cost may be much lower (FEMA, 1998).

Checklist of Considerations in Protecting Your Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Compressor, heat pump and other outdoor equipment:

- Is expected flooding shallow enough that the equipment can be put up on a pedestal?
- If not, can the equipment be moved to a porch or other location above the Design Flood Event (or DFE - normally one foot above the 100-year flood).
- If not, construct a balcony to elevate the equipment.
- If the building is located in a shallow flood area, can a dry floodproof enclosure be built around the equipment?